

AVALANCHE ADVISORY

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

FORECASTER: Davis

IDAHO PANHANDLE AVALANCHE CENTER

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/11/2011

DATE ISSUED: 03/11/2011 0730

OUTLOOK: 03/12-13/2011

This report does not apply to local ski areas within the forecast region and the hazard rating will remain valid through midnight March 11th, 2011. Special thanks to Idaho Parks and recreation for sponsoring this Avalanche advisory.

Big snow and big winds for much of this past week. Local ski areas are reporting big accumulations in the past 24 hours. This is adding up to some tempting but tricky conditions out there today, read on.



WEATHER

TODAY: Not a great chance of snow today across our forecast region, temperatures will be in the high 20s, and winds will be blowing out of the west with gusty winds to the south.



TONIGHT: Continued mild conditions in the mountains, with mostly cloudy skies, temperatures in the low 20s, and light south winds.

SATURDAY: Saturday and Sunday the outlook calls for a better than average chance of an inch of snow, more to the south, temperatures above freezing during the day, and S/SW winds, more gusty to the south. Snowfall is expected through Saturday night and trailing off slightly into Sunday. **The avalanche danger will increase during the warming daytime hours and during rain with the expected weather.**

Selkirks and Cabinet mountains: Yesterday, in a steady downpour, we left Coolin and prayed we would break into the snow quickly. At the warming hut it was snowing heavily, 2-3 inches per hour. In Echo Bowl we found heavy new snow accumulating over varying density snow from the past week. Clean shears came about 2 feet deep in low density snow on a NE aspect and cracks propagated across our block telling me that larger avalanches are possible with denser snow accumulating on top of this weak layer. On the NW side we got a very easy shear on a 37 degree slope about 1 foot deep. I heard whumphing in places and cracks were beginning to run. I got a report of an decent size avalanche on Lunch Peak last Saturday. A lot of snow in the past 24 hours, 3 inches of water equaling 20 inches of snow in the Cabinets. About 1.3-2.2 inches of water equaling 10 inches of snow in the Selkirks. That's a lot of load on those weak layers, then here you come. Avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE** on windloaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. The avalanche danger is MODERATE on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

		Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative	Natural avalanches possible; human- triggered avalanches likely.	Small avalanches in many areas; or large avalanches in specific areas; or very large avalanches in isolated areas.
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St. Regis Basin and Silver valley: Carole and Dan noted numerous point releases on the steep roadcuts off the interstate yesterday on their way up to Lookout Pass. Conditions were wet with rainfall abating just before they arrived in the morning. They found a significant weak layer in the snow from last week about 2 feet in depth. The weak layer, at a change in density, failed with moderate force applied but cleanly. Being 2 feet deep and having increasingly heavy snow loaded on top of it should have you concerned about the terrain you choose today and this weekend. Silver mountain is reporting 24 inches of new snow in 24 hours and Lookout Pass, 13 inches. Warm temperatures and rain could add even more weight to the snowpack. The avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE** on windloaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. The avalanche danger is MODERATE on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

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Winds were strong out of the west for the past 48 hours or so. Easterly aspects will be most heavily loaded but all aspects seem to have weak layers, of varying sensitivity in that change in density snow. The overlying snow will be getting heavier with more snow, warming temperatures, and possibly rain. Pay attention to the signs, shooting cracks, whumphing, and natural avalanches.

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The next advisory will be issued on March 18th, 2011.